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AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 22, and continuing to page 14, line 6, as follows:

Fig. 4 shows, in the context of the embodiment of Fig. 1A, admission of a new connection to the AAL2 path group in an illustrative scenario. The capacity database 102 shows, for each AAL2 path, a total capacity and an available capacity. For example, AAL2 path 35₁ has a total capacity TC₁ but no available capacity, whereas AAL2 path 35₂ has a total capacity TC₂ and an available capacity AC₂. At the time shown in Fig. 4, a new connection 30₁₋₁ is sought over AAL2 path 35₁. Since AAL2 path 35₁ has no available capacity, traditional admission control techniques would either reject the requested new connection 30₁₋₁ or cut off an existing connection carried on AAL2 path 35₁ in order to make room for the requested new connection. In accordance with the present invention, by contrast, admission controller 100 realizes that, while AAL2 path 35₁ has no available capacity, the AAL2 path group 60 which includes AAL2 path 35₁ has available capacity. For example, AAL2 path 35₂ is one of the AAL2 paths comprising the AAL2 path group 60 which has spare capacity. Assuming the total spare capacity of the AAL2 path group exceeds the bandwidth required for the requested new connection 30₁₋₁, in accordance with the present invention the admission controller 100 admits the new requested connection.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 9, as follows:

Moreover, the present invention only requires one virtual path between two nodes, which is economically desirable when transport is leased from an ATM transport network provider. Leasing one virtual path of, e.g., 2 Mbit/s is much ~~cheaper~~ cheaper than leasing two virtual paths with 1 Mbit/s each. Further, the present invention provides a better multiplexing gain on the ATM level when all cells are multiplexed on the same virtual path.